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Mahathir-Support

ONLY MALAYSIANS CAN DETERMINE THE FATE OF THE NATION, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 14 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that only Malaysians have the right to determine the fate and future of the nation and not foreign leaders or the Western media.

The prime minister said some foreigners had been saying that he and the present government no longer have the support of the people and that the people wanted to bring down the government.

"Actually, they want me to be removed and replaced by someone who will bow to them, who will sell the country...that is why they initiated efforts to topple the government. They can always try but it is the Malaysians who decide the fate of the nation, not foreign leaders or the Western media," he said at the 50th anniversary celebrations of Kampung Baru Jinjang, here.

Dr Mahathir also said that he was confident of winning the next general election with the Barisan Nasional (BN) getting the support of the majority of the people in the country.

He said that as proven in the just-concluded Sabah state election, the people were aware that the BN strives to ensure peace and security, racial cooperation and national development for them to have a better life.

The BN won 31 out of the 48 seats in the state legislative assembly while the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) won 17 seats. The other parties which contested in the state election were Bersekutu, Setia, Pasok and PAS.

Dr Mahathir said three months ago, local and foreign political observers stated that the BN would not be able to win the election, claiming that the people of Sabah were fed-up with the BN government.

"But yesterday, they could see how the BN has won with a big majority," he said.

This showed that the people of Sabah knew what they wanted, he said.

The prime minister said that it was true that the BN places emphasis on development, like those clearly seen in the federal capital, areas in its vicinity and throughout the country.

"We must remind ourselves how backward we were 50 years ago but through the efforts of the people and a government sensitive to their well-being, we are leading a better life today," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that adequate consideration was always given to the various races which were represented in the government.

That was why, among other things, the people could live in peace and harmony and could hold gatherings like the function today without any fear that there would be chaos like what happened in some other countries, he said.

The prime minister also said that the Chinese community in the country could still carry on with their businesses despite the economic crisis caused by attacks by currency traders.

"But the government has acted to protect the nation from such groups...I am confident that our economy will grow and the people will have more business opportunities," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia was able to defend itself from such attacks because the government had the strong support of the people.

"If the government is weak, we will not be able to defend the country and protect the people...that is why the support of the people is most vital to enable the government to help them," he said.

Referring to today's celebrations, Dr Mahathir said that new villages were set up 50 years ago to protect the people, especially the Chinese

community, from the communiust threat during British rule.

He said that the new villages had grown rapidly and developed into centres for business and small- and medium-scale industries, and had adequate infrastructure.

Dr Mahathir said that this disproved claims that such new villages were like concentration camps for the Jews set up by the Nazis.

Among those present were his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and former Deputy Prime Minister Tun Ghafar Baba.

-- BERNAMA

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